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**NEW REPORT CARD SHOWS LITTLE IMPROVEMENT IN PUBLIC
HEALTH SINCE 2005**

*National Action Plan Promotes Health through Increased Fruit and Vegetable
Consumption*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – A report card released today evaluates the critical players impacting our food choices and their contributions to our nation's public health over the past five years.

In 2005, the National Fruit & Vegetable Alliance (NFVA) – led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Produce for Better Health Foundation (PBH) – developed a National Action Plan, providing a new and comprehensive approach for improved public health through increased fruit and vegetable consumption. Five years later, the Alliance has released a new Report Card to evaluate progress made by schools, restaurants, supermarkets, and federal and state governments in its 2010 National Action Plan (NAP), as well as a set of forward-looking strategies to close the persistent, ongoing gap between actual and recommended consumption.

The NAP report card finds that the average American's fruit and vegetable consumption remains far below recommended levels, despite repeated warnings from high-level federal officials about the impact of diet-related disease. In fact, only six percent of individuals achieve their recommended target for vegetables and only eight percent achieve their recommended target for fruit in an average day. And while food consumed away from home makes up about a third of the average American's daily calories, it accounts for only 11 percent of all fruit and vegetable consumption. To put this in perspective, eight of the states with the lowest fruit and vegetable consumption are also in the top 10 states with the highest obesity rates.

"A diet high in fruits and vegetables helps maintain a healthy weight and reduces the risk of several serious, chronic diseases. The NFVA report card illustrates the continued need to make our homes, worksites and communities places where the choice of healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables becomes the easiest choice," said William Dietz, M.D., Ph.D.,

director of CDC's [Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity](#). "We need to continue our effort in making the healthy choice the easy choice."

The report card assigned an 'A' grade to the WIC Fruit and Vegetable Vouchers program, which was introduced as part of a special supplemental program for Women, Infants and Children. WIC allowed broad inclusion of fruits and vegetables, which had been previously excluded for 30 years. School food and restaurant menus received a 'C' grade for making slight progress over the past five years, particularly with greater availability and variety in fruit and vegetable choices in fast food establishments and cafeterias. Last, a failing grade was assigned to the healthy food advertising category, due to the decrease in nutritious food advertising over time.

"The data clearly indicates that resolving our public health crisis depends on the consistent success and efforts of the many stakeholders involved in America's food choices and eating habits," said Elizabeth Pivonka, Ph.D., R.D., president and CEO of PBH. "From both the private and public sectors, organizations across the spectrum have a vital role to play in making increased fruit and vegetable consumption a reality for all Americans."

In a set of forward looking strategies, the report issued recommendations, that when taken together, would begin to close the gap that exists between actual and recommended fruit and vegetable consumption in this country, they include:

- Increasing the accessibility of fruits and vegetables in communities, schools, worksites and restaurants;
- Strengthening nutrition education programs and promotion efforts that give consumers the skills and motivation they need to make better food choices; and
- Aligning federal funding priorities to be consistent with federal Dietary Guidelines.

"Healthy decisions should not be hard decisions, but for most Americans this is the reality. We need to focus our efforts on promoting healthful foods," said Christine Tobin, RN, MBA, CDE, President, Health Care & Education of the American Diabetes Association. "Chronic and preventable diseases are linked to obesity and poor diets. It's time to step up our prevention efforts."

For more information, read the 2010 National Action Plan Report Card [Executive Summary](#), the [Full Report Card](#), or view the [Grades Only](#).

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About National Fruit & Vegetable Alliance

National Fruit & Vegetable Alliance (NFVA) is an alliance of public and private partners working collaboratively and synergistically to increase nationwide access to and demand for all forms of fruits and vegetables for improved public health. The Alliance is co-chaired by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) and the Produce for Better Health Foundation (PBH), with PBH as secretariat. To learn more, visit www.NFVA.org.